

ALCONBURY AND ELLINGTON INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

Board Meeting

Minutes of the meeting held on 11 June 2013, 10am at Brookfield Farm, Great Stukeley.

PRESENT: H Raby (Chairman), K M Baker; M G Baker; B Chapman; M R Eayres; G Grey; E Heads; D Horsford; E Ruston; J Sewell; L M Simpson and R Warrener.

IN ATTENDANCE: F Bowler (Chief Executive/Clerk); J Oldfield (Director of Operations) and R Easom (Committee Clerk)

1 APOLOGIES for absence were received from C Allen and K Roe.

2 DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

3 ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN

The Chairman informed members of Mr Horsford's decision to resign as Vice Chairman of the Board and he thanked Mr Horsford for his contribution during his time in office.

The Chairman proposed Mr Sewell as Vice Chairman and Mrs Ruston seconded the motion.

Members agreed unanimously to the election of Mr Sewell as Vice Chairman.

Mr Sewell thanked members.

4 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 29 January 2013.

The Minutes of the meeting held on 29 January 2013 were accepted as a true and accurate record.

5 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Environment Agency – Main River Maintenance

Members voiced concern again about the lack of maintenance on Main River by the Environment Agency.

Mr Sewell said he had recently spoken to Environment Agency employees about the poor state of the Alconbury Brook and at least 25 trees which are causing an obstruction. The response had been that they were unable to do anything about it. The Director of Operations said that such an issue has always been the riparian owner's responsibility, although the Board take the view that if an obstruction is causing a flood risk then the Board may clear it from an Ordinary Watercourse.

The Chairman asked who the Board should lobby regarding the lack of maintenance by the EA. The Director of Operations said Peta Denham, Area Flood and Coastal Risk Manager, Environment Agency – Central Area, Anglian Region. The Director of Operations added that the

Board's officers raise the issue with the EA every time there is an EA/IDB Liaison meeting. They also raise the issue with the Association of Drainage Authorities.

6 WORKS PROGRESS REPORT 2012-13

The Director of Operations presented the Works Progress Report and drew members' attention to a typing error at the end of the first paragraph – the contract period covered should read '...from 1st November 2012 to 31st March 2014.'

Members accepted the Works Progress Report.

7 TECHNICAL REPORT

The Director of Operations presented the Technical Report.

Members accepted the Technical Report.

Members approved the recommendation that the ordinary watercourse at the rear of Allen's Orchard, a watercourse not vested in the Board, be maintained, on one occasion only, over its length of 250 meters.

Discussion took place:

Brampton Flood Meeting

Mr K Baker reported that he had been approached by residents concerned about culverts under Allen's Orchard.

The Director of Operations said the main problem had been the exceptionally wet year but also the lack of maintenance on the Brampton Brook. He said a positive point was that all of the flood risk partners had attended the meeting and there should now be a co-ordinated approach.

Mrs Ruston said she hoped the Board would not consider adopting the Brampton Brook, if it would place an increased burden on its maintenance budgets. The Director of Operations said if it was de-mained the Board could at least ensure that the system worked effectively. He said the Boards in the Bedford Group has had previous discussions with the EA about carrying out works on Main River, but had floundered due to logistical problems raised by the EA's solicitor. However, under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010, Section 13 (4), flood risk partners are able to work together on each other's behalf, so IDB working on main rivers may be viable in the future.

8 FINANCE

(i) FINANCE REPORT FOR THE PERIOD 1 APRIL 2012 TO 31 MARCH 2013

The Clerk presented the Finance Report.

Members approved the Finance Report

Discussion took place:

Mr Heads enquired whether there had been a drop in expenditure due to the wet weather. The Clerk said the scheduled maintenance works had almost all been completed with the exception of the area in Stukeley Meadows, as discussed in the Works Progress Report; therefore there had not been a significant reduction in expenditure.

(ii) TO APPROVE THE STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2013

The Clerk presented the Statement of Accounts and added that the £129,149 balance of funds going forward was more than twice the income which the Board receives from rates and special levies. The Audit Commission recommends the balance of funds should only be once that of the income from rates and special levy. However, the Clerk has stated that extremely wet weather could result in much more expenditure and the Internal Auditor had agreed that the current level of balances is reasonable.

Members approved the Statement of Accounts for the year ending 31 March 2013.

(iii) TO APPROVE THE AUDIT COMMISSION ANNUAL RETURN AND ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2013

Members approved the Audit Commission Annual Return and the Annual Governance Statement (answering questions 1 – 8 in the affirmative) for year ending 31 March 2013 for the Chairman and Clerk to sign.

9 INTERNAL AUDIT

(i) TO RECEIVE THE ANNUAL INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT 2012/13

The Clerk presented the Internal Audit report explaining that the Board is audited as part of the Bedford Group. It is the Internal Auditor's final report for the financial year 2012-13 and the Board has been given Adequate Assurance. Substantial Assurance has not been given due to the fact that the Administration department has few staff and segregation of duties is not always possible. However, this is being addressed: the Assistant Finance Officer is changing to a part-time contract and it is planned to employ an apprentice Finance Assistant who will work towards the Association of Accounting Technicians qualification.

The Clerk drew members' attention to the recommendation ref A2 – Elected Board members (not Council Representatives) can claim mileage allowance for attendance at Board meetings.

Members approved the Internal Audit Report.

(ii) TO APPROVE THE INTERNAL AUDIT STRATEGY & AUDIT PLAN 2013-14

Members approved the Internal Audit Strategy & Audit Plan 2013-14.

(iii) TO APPROVE THE REVISED RISK REGISTER

Members approved the Revised Risk Register dated April 2013.

Discussion took place:

Mr Simpson asked how the risk levels were decided. The Clerk said that a matrix which has been presented to the Boards' previously is used and also the Internal Auditor is consulted.

10 TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING DRAFT POLICIES:

(i) EMPLOYEE CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY

The Clerk said that although the Board was not an employing authority she wanted to make members aware of the policy.

Members accepted the Employee Code of Conduct Policy.

(ii) HOSPITALITY & GIFT POLICY

The Clerk added that there is a book available in the Boards' offices in which members and employees of the Board can record any declarable hospitality or gifts.

Members approved the Hospitality & Gift Policy.

(iii) DOCUMENT RETENTION POLICY

Members approved the Document Retention Policy.

Discussion took place:

The Chairman asked whether the electronic back up could be affected by a fire. The Clerk said that a back up was taken off the premises each night.

11 DATE OF NEXT MEETING: 4 February 2014

12 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Huntingdon Racecourse – Hotel Access

Mr Sewell enquired about the Board's involvement with the access road for the new hotel at Huntingdon Racecourse. He was concerned that what was being created was, effectively, a 100m dam.

The Director of Operations said the Board's involvement was on-going but the Environment Agency was the authority policing it, as it was associated to Main River and its flood plain. The developer was looking to raise the road and their proposal ties in with the EA's computer model of only increasing water levels by 7mm for a 1 in 100 year event. The EA has asked that further models and timings are obtained in order to ensure that the raised causeway does not make

flooding last longer. The Director of Operations believes that the situation could be exacerbated by the condition of the watercourse.

The Director of Operations said the EA were committed to keeping the Board involved with the developer's proposals and he would arrange a meeting with the appropriate Board members when EA officers have information to discuss.

The meeting closed at 11.10 am.